



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
760 South Broadway  
Salina, Kansas 67401-4604

Phone: 785-823-4500  
FAX: 785-823-4540  
www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov

November 18, 2013

## KANSAS BULLETIN NO. KS300-14-7

### **SUBJECT: LTP–Environmental Quality Incentives Program Cutoff Dates and Deadlines**

**Action required by field offices (FOs):** December 16, 2013  
December 20, 2013  
January 17, 2014  
February 7, 2014  
March 21, 2014

**Action required by area offices (AOs):** February 21, 2014  
March 7, 2014  
March 14, 2014  
April 4, 2014

**Action required by state office (SO):** December, 30, 2013

**Purpose:** To announce the Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) action dates

**Expiration Date:** September 30, 2015

#### **Deadlines**

To ensure consistency statewide, the aforementioned dates have been set for Program Contracts System (ProTracts) entries, screening tool entries, location county notification, ranking information, and peer reviews. **Servicing counties shall notify location county offices of applications received in their counties by these dates as well** (e.g., Seneca servicing FO shall notify the Marysville location FO of the application number and ranking category of an application with land [or the majority of land] physically located in Marshall County). The FOs shall work together to ensure the application ranking is completed in a timely manner.

**NOTE:** National and Landscape initiatives shall have separate deadlines.

(more)

DIST: A, F, S, C. Nelson

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- The following information shall be entered in ProTracts for all applications by **December, 16 2013**:
  - Program
  - Application FY
  - Sign-up Date
  - Servicing Office
  - Location County
  - Applicant(s)
  - Application Status (pending, eligible, ineligible, or cancelled)
  - Fund Code

**NOTE:** Funds codes must not be changed after this date unless the participant is signing up for an EQIP initiative, Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP), or Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP).

Applications will remain in “pending” status until all participant and land eligibility requirements have been met. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is under no obligation to evaluate or rank an application until these requirements are met.

Applicants without current eligibility determinations processed by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) (see Title 440, Conservation Programs Manual [CPM], Part 512, Section 512.24) must be notified by the FO by mail with a Program Eligibility Certification Letter by **December 20, 2013**, and the letter template can be found in CPM, Section 512.91 (see attachment 1). The participant must file or update the required certifications within 30 days of receipt of the letter for the NRCS to consider the application for the current ranking period. If eligibility status of the participant is not updated within the 30-day period, the application will be determined ineligible.

If ineligibility is confirmed, the FO must notify the participant by certified mail using the Ineligibility Determination for Conservation Program Contract Letter (see attachment 2), which provides appeal rights according to Title 440, CPM, Part 510. The letter template can be found in CPM, Section 512.93. The application status in ProTracts must be changed to “ineligible.”

- Application Priority will be entered in ProTracts by **January 17, 2014**. (Required for eligible applications in the Grazing Lands Health, Soil Health, and Water Quality ranking categories only.)
- Counties shall have plans uploaded and ranked in ProTracts by **February 7, 2014**.
- Application evaluation peer reviews will be completed by **February 21, 2014**.
- Any funds remaining within a management unit shall be redistributed to the AOs by **March 7, 2014**.
- The regional conservationist shall review and obligate all approved applications of \$150,000 or greater as outlined in Bulletin KS300-13-50. The assistant state conservationists for field operations (ASTCs-FO) shall submit questionnaires to the appropriate program manager by close of business (COB) **March 14, 2014**.

- Documentation shall be forwarded to the Financial Management Staff for second level review of obligations by **March 21, 2014**.
- ASTCs-FO shall notify the appropriate program manager of funds to be returned to the SO level by **April 4, 2014**. A second application evaluation period cutoff date shall be announced if there are remaining funds.

**All approved applications shall be obligated (signed contract) by April 4, 2014.**

**NOTE:** Due to the pending migration to Toolkit 7, you are encouraged to complete conservation planning as soon as possible.

### **Screening Tool Deadline**

Using the screening tool is required for the Soil Health and Water Quality ranking categories (see Kansas Bulletin KS300-14-6). Applications with an eligible or pending status in the Water Quality and Soil Health ranking categories will be entered into the screening tool database by **December 16, 2013**. The screening tool will be locked close of business **December 16, 2013**, so any application not entered on time will be considered a "Low Priority" application.

The SO will run the screening tool reports with the assigned priorities to be distributed to the AOs and FOs by **December 30, 2013**.

### **Reviews**

ASTCs-FO shall ensure that all application evaluations (rankings) are peer reviewed (per CPM, Part 515, Section 515.72[A][6]) prior to preapproval of applications. This review shall focus on the ranking and eligibility status of the contract.

Per the Kansas Quality Assurance Plan, a peer review of all approved applications prior to obligation is required. This review should focus on contract documentation.

**Contact:** Please forward questions, through established channels to Corey L. Nelson, Resource Conservationist, at 785-823-4580 or [corey.nelson@ks.usda.gov](mailto:corey.nelson@ks.usda.gov).

*(Signed)*

ERIC B. BANKS  
State Conservationist

Attachments